



MEETING MINUTES / 20 DECEMBER 2016

ATTENDANCE:

Present: Farley, Showell, Armbruster, Baldwin, Bradley, Coons, Lardizzone, McMullen, Sarg, Seppala, and Smith **68.7%**

Absences: Carroll, Hampton, Newman, and Newstadt

Guests: Pat Cerchio-Vieira (First State Women Warriors), Vivian Starnes (DAV Auxiliary), Dave Skocik (Friends DVTF), Glenn Geesaman, Christine Bradley, Freddy Allen (Veterans Center), Shannon Hardester (Sussex Veterans Center), Jason Stewart, Arthur Jenkins (Controller General), Jack Tillman

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS:

During Moment of Silence, acknowledged victims of recent European violence and for Service Members serving in harm's way.

MEETING MINUTES:

Commissioner McMullen made the motion and Commissioner Lardizzone seconded for approval.

ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:

Wilmington VAMC – Robert Callahan, Acting Director

Not present

Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Bill Peterson, Director:

113 residents and 130 on waiting list

The Gold unit is being finalized; completion is two to three weeks out

The Holiday Party was a huge success

- Enjoyed by residents

- Various Commissioners were in attendance

The bathing suits should be complete in January

- Governor's budget approved funds for additional bathing suites, looking to add two more

Tele Health should be running by February

Commissioners can receive identification photographs/badges in January at the Commission meeting

(Armbruster) Are there any updates on Adult Day Care?

The bill did not make it out of the Senate (U.S.) and will need 30 signatures to go forward. The bill will be re-introduced next session

Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:

Not present

DOL – Veteran Employment and Training Service, State Director, Dave Rich,

A Continuing Resolution was approved, through 2 April 2017, which will continue to fund state employment programs

Work continues with the Employment Training Agency to

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Joe Rodriguez, Commander Delaware Veterans Post 1

Thanked the Commission for their continuous support of Veterans

Explained that Post 1 has assisted Veterans through various means (i.e. fundraisers, information, etc.)

- Donated \$100K toward Veteran causes in the last five years

Been a part of the Commission since its inception

- Sad to no longer be a part (due to current Commission's position change to an At-Large position)

(Showell) For clarification, At-Large members serve in an official capacity within the Commission

(Newstadt) You can still discuss your organization's focus during Commission meetings

(Smith) Does not believe the Delaware Veterans' position should be transitioning to an At-Large position

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Armbruster:

Interments - 78

Five individuals interviewed for the Maintenance Supervisor position

Five individuals were scheduled to interview for the Seasonal Casual (admin) position but none showed

- The Cemetery Administrator would like this to become a full-time position based on the increased workload

****This has been discussed with Director Kirby and brought to the Department of State's attention****

- Maybe the Commission can work a partnership with a local university to help fill the position with interns/volunteers

Cemetery Administrator is seeking permission to move donated plaques/trees as they deteriorate or block expansion

- The University of Delaware's Beautification Team has a concept to place those items in a place of honor

(Newstadt/Lardizzone) Movement of the items is a political issues that has been debated for some time

****Director Kirby has sought guidance from the Deputy Secretary of State on this issue****

Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:

Interments - 30

Commissioner Bradley introduced himself as the new POC

Delivered American Veteran flags to the cemetery for delivery to the Bear cemetery

Health and Human Services, Commissioner:

Nothing to report

Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen

Please review the recommended legislative items and provide comments/recommendations by the December meeting

Commemorative Affairs, Commissioner Showell

The ceremony host list will be updated

(Kirby) The new list will only go out three years and will be reviewed/updated each December to confirm availability

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:

Commissioner McMullen (AFSA)

Completed an Adopt A Highway project cleaning a Kent County roadway

Visited Delaware Veterans Home interfacing with residents and working projects

18 October - Attended Governor's Volunteer Award Dinner to see Liz Byers-Jiron receive her award

22 October – Briefed Dover AFB Retiree Day on Commission functions

Commissioner Armbruster (AL)

National Commander's Delaware visit is 15 – 17 March

State Commander visited Reno (NV) to review 2017 national convention site

Commissioner Bradley (AMVETS)

Visited the Vietnam Veterans Wall in Washington DC

Post 2 held a Vietnam Veterans Ceremony

Post 2 Auxiliary visited the Home of the Brave to help residents

Commissioner Smith (DELVETS)

Attended Delaware Order of Police Veterans Day event

Attended Victory Village ribbon cutting event

Attended Wilmington VAMC POW/MIA Dedication ceremony

Commissioner Lardizzone (DAV)

Veteran Service Officers have received a status reclassification (upgrade)

Attended the CHEER Center Veterans Dinner

Attended the Department of State's budget hearing

Informed that the Secretary of State will provide \$40K toward a World War I memorial. Will meet with Sipple and Sons for draft plans

Commissioner Coons (KWVA)

Not present

Commissioner Farley (MCL)

14 November - Visited White House for national summit on Veteran Homelessness

- Spoke to audience about Delaware's program

- Met First Lady Obama and Dr. Biden

15 November – Attended Task Force on Firearm Suicide Prevention hosted by Governor Markell

Chairman Sarg (MOAA)

Not present

Commissioner Carroll (MOPH)

Not present

Commissioner Seppala (MOWW)

Not present

Commissioner Newman (VFW)

Attended Eastern State Conference

Projected to visit National Home for Children from 3 – 5 December

Visited Wilmington VAMC interfacing with residents

Camden Post meeting provided information supporting medical cannabis. Veteran provided the data and Senator Ennis may support a bill

Commissioner Baldwin (VVA)

Marine Corps Ball is scheduled to be held at the First State Military Academy

Will visit the Rodel Foundation of Delaware to solicit Trust Fund donations

Commissioner Newstadt (At Large)

Jewish War Veterans had a professional speaker present on dementia and its affects
Ten Jewish War Veterans attended the Bridge Ceremony
Assisted the Faulk Road Cemetery in replacing American flags

Commissioner Showell (At Large)

Attended the Welcome Home Ceremony for the Delaware National Guard

21 November – Attended Wilmington VAMC meeting for caregivers, discussed Veteran support with mental health issues (emphasized medication use/monitoring)

Delaware National Guard Holiday Concerts are 7 December (Grand Opera House) and 8 December (Rollins Center)

Commissioner Hampton (At Large)

Not present

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

DVTF: Requests 9, Granted 6 (66%), Awarded \$6904.61 and Balance \$55,700.00

TERM EXPIRATION:

Hampton 22 February 2017

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Veterans Day Parade (CLOSED)

By-Law Review (CLOSED)

Commission met in closed session following meeting and approved recommended By-Law Committee changes.

By-Laws will be updated and forwarded for review/signature

NEW BUSINESS:

World War I Memorial

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:

Holiday Party will follow the December meeting at Delaware Veterans Post 2

(Newstadt) Working with Wilmington VAMC to resolve issue of county ambulances transporting Veterans to the correct Emergency Room

(Baldwin) Discussed a case where a Veteran received an ambulance bill from transport from a house fire

Commissioners were asked to join a Commission Committee

SPECIAL SESSION:

Commission met and approved proposed Legislative Recommendations for the next General Assembly

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, 18 January 2017 at 10:00 AM

LOCATION:

Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs